



Home Office

Country Information and Guidance

Yemen: Security and humanitarian situation

Version 2.0

April 2016

Preface

This document provides country of origin information (COI) and guidance to Home Office decision makers on handling particular types of protection and human rights claims. This includes whether claims are likely to justify the granting of asylum, humanitarian protection or discretionary leave and whether – in the event of a claim being refused – it is likely to be certifiable as ‘clearly unfounded’ under s94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.

Decision makers must consider claims on an individual basis, taking into account the case specific facts and all relevant evidence, including: the guidance contained with this document; the available COI; any applicable caselaw; and the Home Office casework guidance in relation to relevant policies.

Country Information

The COI within this document has been compiled from a wide range of external information sources (usually) published in English. Consideration has been given to the relevance, reliability, accuracy, objectivity, currency, transparency and traceability of the information and wherever possible attempts have been made to corroborate the information used across independent sources, to ensure accuracy. All sources cited have been referenced in footnotes. It has been researched and presented with reference to the [Common EU \[European Union\] Guidelines for Processing Country of Origin Information \(COI\)](#), dated April 2008, and the European Asylum Support Office’s research guidelines, [Country of Origin Information report methodology](#), dated July 2012.

Feedback

Our goal is to continuously improve the guidance and information we provide. Therefore, if you would like to comment on this document, please [e-mail us](#).

Independent Advisory Group on Country Information

The Independent Advisory Group on Country Information (IAGCI) was set up in March 2009 by the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration to make recommendations to him about the content of the Home Office’s COI material. The IAGCI welcomes feedback on the Home Office’s COI material. It is not the function of the IAGCI to endorse any Home Office material, procedures or policy.

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Information about the IAGCI’s work and a list of the COI documents which have been reviewed by the IAGCI can be found on the Independent Chief Inspector’s website at <http://icinspector.independent.gov.uk/country-information-reviews/>

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Guidance

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1. Introduction

1.1 Basis of Claim

- 1.1.1 That the general humanitarian situation in Yemen is so severe as to make removal a breach of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR); and/or
- 1.1.2 That the security situation in Yemen presents a real risk which threatens life or person such that removal would be in breach of Article 15(c) of European Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 ('the Qualification Directive').

2. Consideration of Issues

2.1 Credibility

- 2.1.1 For further information and guidance on assessing credibility, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).
- 2.1.2 Decision makers must also check if there has been a previous application for a UK visa or another form of leave. Asylum applications matched to visas should be investigated prior to the asylum interview: see the [Asylum Instruction on Visa Matches, Asylum Claims from UK Visa Applicants](#).
- 2.1.3 Decision makers should also consider the need to conduct language analysis testing: see the [Asylum Instruction on Language Analysis](#)

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2.2 Exclusion

- 2.2.1 Parties on all sides of the conflict have reportedly been responsible for numerous serious human rights abuses (see [country information](#)). If it is accepted that the person has been involved in such activities then decision makers must consider whether one of the Exclusion clauses is applicable.
- 2.2.2 For further information and guidance on the exclusion clauses, discretionary leave and restricted leave, see the [Asylum Instruction on Exclusion: Article 1F of the Refugee Convention](#), the [Asylum Instruction on Discretionary Leave](#) and the [Asylum Instruction on Restricted Leave](#).

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2.3 Assessment of risk

- 2.3.1 Yemen is split along political, religious and tribal lines and human rights abuses have been widespread. In assessing risk, decision makers should first consider if the person faces persecution or serious harm for a Refugee Convention reason.
- 2.3.2 It is only if the person does not qualify under the Refugee Convention that decision makers need to make an assessment of the need for protection firstly under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and, if that is unsuccessful, under Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive.

- 2.3.3 Unlike Article 3 ECHR, Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive applies only to civilians, who must be genuine non-combatants and not those who are party to the conflict. This could include former combatants who have genuinely and permanently renounced armed activity.

Humanitarian situation

- 2.3.4 Yemen is experiencing one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the world. The humanitarian situation has deteriorated across the country following the escalation in the conflict in March 2015. On 1 July 2015, the UN declared a Level 3 (most severe) emergency response for Yemen (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.3.5 Yemen has a population of roughly 26 million. Of those, 80% (21.2 million) are assessed by the UN as needing humanitarian assistance. Those who are particularly vulnerable include an estimated 7.6 million suffering from severe food shortages; 2 million are malnourished, of which 320,000 are children under 5 who are severely malnourished; and 2.5 million people are internally displaced. Basic services have been seriously affected, with an estimated 19.4 million lacking access to safe water and sanitation and an estimated 14.4 million people with inadequate access to basic healthcare (see [Humanitarian situation](#)).
- 2.3.6 Most of Yemen remains difficult to access by humanitarian agencies because of continuing airstrikes, localised fighting and ongoing insecurity and restrictions in freedom of movement (see [Humanitarian Access](#) and [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.3.7 The humanitarian situation in Aden (and some areas in southern Yemen) while harsh does not in general breach Article 3 of the ECHR, but is likely to do so for particularly vulnerable people (e.g. single women or disabled people) and each case should be assessed on its individual merits. However conditions in areas in the east, centre and north of the country, including Sana'a, are likely to breach Article 3 in most cases. Decision makers should refer to the latest available country information about the humanitarian situation in the place concerned (see [Humanitarian situation](#), [Humanitarian Access](#) and [Annex A: Current resources](#)) and consider how the humanitarian conditions would impact upon that particular person if they were returned.

2.4 Security situation

- 2.4.1 The security situation in Yemen has deteriorated during 2015 with the erosion of central authority and the fragmentation of the Yemeni army. Nearly 6,000 people have been killed since the Saudi coalition entered the conflict in March 2015 with almost half of those killed being civilians (see [Security situation](#)).
- 2.4.2 Since July 2015, following the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh having extended their influence into much of the south, including most of Aden, the Yemeni government with support from southern militia groups and Saudi Arabian-led coalition ground and air forces have regained control in the southern governorates. The pro-government forces have also begun to challenge the Houthis and forces loyal to former President Saleh in central

and northern Yemen. However, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have effective control of some of the coast along the south of the country and several miles inland. There have been some reports of limited Houthi/Saleh offensives in the south and frequent bombings of targets in Aden by Jihadist groups, notably AQAP and Daesh-Yemen, some of which have killed or targeted civilians. AQAP has also carried out attacks in Southern governates, and Daesh-Yemen has claimed responsibility for a number of bombings in Houthi controlled areas, including in Sana'a, with high numbers of casualties (see [Security situation](#)).

- 2.4.3 While violent clashes continue across the country, with civilians largely bearing the brunt of the conflict, fighting and armed clashes have increasingly moved into eastern, central and northern Yemen. Areas in Southern Yemen, including Aden, remain unstable, with regular attacks carried out by AQAP and Daesh-Yemen mainly against Houthi, coalition and government targets (see [Security situation](#)).
- 2.4.4 The security situation in Aden and some areas of southern Yemen is currently unlikely to breach Article 15(c) of the QD. However, decision makers should refer to the latest available country information as the situation is fluid and volatile. (see [Annex A: Current resources](#)).
- 2.4.5 Elsewhere in the country there are reports of the use of indiscriminate violence by both sides including the use of cluster bombs and attacks on civilian homes, hospitals, schools, markets and factories and reports of civilians fleeing air strikes being chased and shot at by helicopters. In the north, west and centre of the country levels of indiscriminate violence are currently likely to be at such a level that substantial grounds exist for believing that a person, solely by being present there, faces a real risk of harm which threatens their life or person. Again decision makers should refer to the latest available country information as the situation is rapidly evolving. (see [Annex A: Current resources](#)).
- 2.4.6 Even if there may be no general Article 15(c) risk, decision makers must consider whether there are particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances which might nevertheless place them at risk.
- 2.4.7 For further guidance on assessing risk, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#) and for guidance on Article 15(c), including consideration of enhanced risk factors, see the [Asylum Instruction on Humanitarian Protection](#).

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2.5 Internal relocation

Travel within Yemen is restricted by the high and fluctuating levels of violence through most of the country, as well as severe fuel shortages. Yemeni air space is currently controlled by Saudi-led coalition forces. Yemenia Airways is operating limited flights from Sana'a and Aden airports, however their schedule is subject to last minute alterations or cancellation (see [Freedom of movement](#)).

- 2.5.1 Most territory is either under the de facto control of local tribes who use road blocks to negotiate with the government over security issues and economic

benefits, or the Houthi movement. Security risks are highest between Sanaa and Ma'rib, and around Hodeidah and Aden, where food and other imports can be controlled. Some areas of land are also under the control or influence of AQAP (see [Freedom of movement](#)).

- 2.5.2 Societal discrimination severely restricts the freedom of movement of women, although restrictions vary by location (see [Freedom of movement](#)).
- 2.5.3 Relocating to most parts of Yemen remains difficult, a number of Yemenis have relocated internally to flee combat zones (mostly to Taiz, Amran and Hajjah governorates). Although in some cases relocation to Aden and surrounding areas may be feasible, the volatile security environment and frequent violence, harsh humanitarian situation and lack of livelihood opportunities mean that this will not be possible for many Yemeni citizens. Decision makers must give careful consideration to the relevance and reasonableness of internal relocation on a case-by-case basis taking full account of the individual circumstances of the particular person, including where they originate from in Yemen and where they will be returning to.
- 2.5.4 Decision makers must refer to the latest available country information when considering internal relocation. (see [Annex A: Current resources](#))
- 2.5.5 For further information on considering internal relocation and the factors to be taken into account, see the [Asylum Instruction on Assessing Credibility and Refugee Status](#).

2.6 Certification

- 2.6.1 Where a claim falls to be refused, it is unlikely to be certifiable as 'clearly unfounded' under section 94 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002.
- 2.6.2 For further information and guidance on certification, see the [Asylum Instruction on Non-Suspensive Appeals: Certification Under Section 94 of the NIA Act 2002](#).

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3. Policy summary

- 3.1.1 Yemen is in a state of armed conflict which has led to a deterioration in the security and humanitarian situation. Airstrikes and armed clashes on the ground continue particularly in the east, north and centre of the country, in and around Sana'a. Although since July 2015 the situation has improved in Aden and some other parts of southern Yemen, Aden still faces huge security challenges including a rise of targeted killings and the presence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda and Daesh, which has led to, in January 2016, a dusk to dawn curfew being imposed on the city.
- 3.1.2 The humanitarian situation in Aden and some other areas of southern Yemen while harsh is not in general at such a level as to breach Article 3, but may do so for vulnerable people (e.g. single women or disabled people, etc.) and each case should be assessed on its individual merits. The security situation in Aden and some areas of southern Yemen is currently, in general, unlikely to breach Article 15(c) of the QD but particular factors relevant to the person's individual circumstances or profile might, nevertheless, place

them at risk. However, the situation remains fluid and volatile, and each case will need to be considered on its individual merits, taking into account up to date country information.

- 3.1.3 In the north, west and centre of the country the humanitarian and security conditions are likely, in many cases, to breach Article 3 and / or Article 15(c) of the QD. Each case will need to be considered on its individual merits, taking into account up to date country information.
- 3.1.4 Internal relocation within Yemen is unlikely to be a viable option for most people although it may be for some individuals, depending on their particular circumstances.

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4. Political situation

4.1.1 The Council for Foreign Relations background on Yemen stated: 'The modern Yemeni state was formed in 1990 with the unification of the U.S.- and Saudi-backed Yemeni Arab Republic, in the north, and the USSR-backed People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, to the south. The military officer Ali Abdullah Saleh, who had ruled North Yemen since 1978, assumed leadership of the new country. (President Saleh left Yemen in July 2011, following an injury sustained in a rocket attack, but returned in September 2011¹). Somewhat larger than the state of California, Yemen has a population of about twenty-five million.

'Despite unification, the central government's writ beyond the capital of Sana'a was never absolute, and Saleh secured his power through patronage and by playing various factions off one another.

'Under Saleh, Yemen faced numerous challenges to its unity. Al-Hirak, a movement of southern Yemenis who felt marginalized under the post-unification government, rebelled in 1994; they have since pressed for greater autonomy within Yemen, if not secession. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and the related Ansar al-Sharia insurgent group have captured territory in the south. The Houthi movement, whose base is among the Zaydi Shias of northern Yemen, rose up against Saleh's government six times between 2004 and 2010.²

4.1.2 The same report stated:

'Yemen faces its biggest crisis in decades with the overthrow of its government by the Houthis, a Zaydi Shia movement backed by Iran. As the Houthis captured the capital of Sana'a and advanced south toward the Gulf of Aden in March 2015, a Saudi-led coalition launched an air campaign to reinstate Yemen's internationally recognized government.

'These developments have derailed a political transition following a 2011 uprising against longtime President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Amid factional fighting, al-Qaeda's Arabian Peninsula franchise has found new opportunities to capture territory. Meanwhile, in July 2015, the United Nations designated the humanitarian emergency in Yemen as severe and complex as those in Iraq, South Sudan, and Syria, while Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called for a pause in hostilities to facilitate the delivery of relief supplies...'³

¹ BBC News: Yemen profile – Timeline – last updated 25 November 2015

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-14704951>

[date accessed 3 February 2016]

² Council on Foreign Relations, 'Backgrounder: Yemen in Crisis', 8 July 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488>. [date accessed 3 February 2016]

³ Council on Foreign Relations, 'Backgrounder: Yemen in Crisis', 8 July 2015,

'As the Arab uprisings spread to Yemen in 2011, the president's political and military rivals jockeyed to oust him. While Yemeni security forces focused on putting down protests in urban areas, al-Qaeda made gains in outlying regions.'

'Under escalating domestic and international pressure, Saleh stepped aside after receiving assurances of immunity from prosecution. His vice president, Abed Rabbo Mansour al-Hadi, assumed office as interim president in a transition brokered by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and backed by the United States. As part of the GCC's timetable for a transition, in 2013 the UN-sponsored National Dialogue Conference (NDC) convened 565 delegates to formulate a new constitution agreeable to Yemen's many factions. But the NDC ended after delegates couldn't resolve disputes over the distribution of power.'⁴

4.1.3 The UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office website reported:

'President Hadi escaped Houthi-imposed house arrest on 20 February 2015. On 25 March 2015 a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, began air strikes in Yemen following the request for support from President Hadi to deter continued Houthi aggression. Airstrikes continue throughout the country and clashes continue across the country between competing forces... The political and security situation remains uncertain and volatile.'⁵

4.1.4 International Crisis Group wrote in March 2015 in their Middle East Briefing no 45:

'On 25 March 2015, the Houthis captured a strategic military base north of the port city of Aden and took the defence minister hostage. That evening Saudi Arabia launched a military campaign, in coordination with nine other, mostly Arab states, to stop the Houthi advance and restore his government. Hadi left for Riyadh and will attend an Arab League summit on 28 March [2015]. No major party seems truly to want to halt what threatens to become a regional war. The slim chance to salvage a political process requires that regional actors immediately cease military action and help the domestic parties agree on a broadly acceptable president or presidential council. Only then can Yemenis return to the political negotiating table to address other outstanding issues.'⁶

4.1.5 The briefing further stated:

'The Houthi-Hadi divide is the most explosive, but it is not the only conflict. Tensions are also unsettling the recent 'marriage of convenience' between

<http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488>. [date accessed 3 February 2016]

⁴ Council on Foreign Relations, 'Backgrounder: Yemen in Crisis', 8 July 2015, <http://www.cfr.org/yemen/yemen-crisis/p36488>. [date accessed 3 February 2016]

⁵ Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security Gov.UK Last updated 19 January 2016 <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

⁶ International Crisis Group: 'Yemen at War' – Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No.45 27 March 2015 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/yemen/b045-yemen-at-war.aspx> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

the Houthis and former President Ali Abdollah Saleh, who, after being deposed in 2011, has taken advantage of popular dissatisfaction and tacitly allied himself with the Houthis against their common enemies to stage a political comeback through his party, the General People's Congress (GPC), and possibly his son, Ahmed Ali Abdollah Saleh. Divisions in the south, which was an independent state prior to its 1990 union with the north, are rampant as well. Southern separatists are internally split and suspicious of Hadi, a southerner who supports continued unity with the north. Then there are al-Qaeda and a nascent Islamic State (IS) movement, both determined to fight the Houthis and take advantage of the state's collapse to claim territory.'⁷

4.1.6 In March 2015, the Telegraph reported:

'The U.S Special Forces evacuated from Yemen as the security situation deteriorates. The last remaining U.S troops have left Yemen as Sunni and Shia forces wage an increasingly lethal battle. America withdrew its remaining 100 Special Forces troops from Yemen in a sign of the rapid unraveling of the country – which on the 20 March was hit by one of its worst ever terrorist attacks.

'The US soldiers left their base near Al-Houta, after al-Qaeda seized the city. Yemen has been hurtling towards civil war since last year, when the Houthis – who belong to a sect derived from Shia Islam – advanced from their northern heartland, taking over the capital Sana'a and nine of the country's 21 provinces over the past six months, and raising fears of a civil war. The triple bomb blasts, which killed 150 and injured 351, were claimed by a splinter group of fighters from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (Isil) – marking a worrying escalation in the conflict between the Shia Houthis and the Sunni forces of Isil and al-Qaeda.'⁸

4.1.7 Reuter's News Agency reported:

'Islamic State's Yemen branch claimed responsibility for two bombings at a mosque in a northern district of the capital Sanaa that media (run by the Houthi militia) said killed at least 28 people and wounded 75 on Wednesday (2 September 2015). The al-Mo'ayyad mosque, run by the Houthis in the al-Jarraf neighbourhood of Sanaa, has previously been targeted by the ultra-radical Islamic State, who regard the Iran-allied Houthis as heretics.

'The Houthi-controlled Saba news agency said in a text message that the first explosion was caused by a suicide bomber in the al-Mo'ayyad mosque, followed by a car bomb blast that targeted medics outside the building.'⁹

⁷ International Crisis Group: 'Yemen at War' – Crisis Group Middle East Briefing No.45 27 March 2015 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-iran-gulf/yemen/b045-yemen-at-war.aspx> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

⁸ The Telegraph: 'US Special Forces evacuated from Yemen as security situation deteriorates' 21 March 2015 <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/11487729/US-special-forces-evacuated-from-Yemen-as-security-situation-deteriorates.html> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

⁹ Reuter's News Agency: 'Islamic State claims bomb attack on Yemeni mosque; 28 reported dead' 2

4.1.8 The Telegraph reported that President Hadi returned to Aden for three days, arriving on 22 September 2015 and meeting with various ministers and members of his Government. He subsequently left, to attend talks in New York with the United Nations. The Telegraph report stated:

‘His return is the most concrete sign yet that a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia has secured enough territory from the Iran-allied Houthi militia for the exiled government to resume administering at least part of the country.

‘Mr Hadi was greeted by Khaled Bahah, the prime minister, and several ministers who had returned to Aden last week to help set up an interim administration. An alliance of Arab states – mostly Yemen's wealthy Arabian Peninsula neighbours – intervened in the impoverished country's civil war in March with the aim of restoring Mr Hadi, and have helped drive the Iranian-allied Houthi forces back from Aden.

‘Gulf ground troops are now trying to push into Houthi strongholds in northern Yemen and in Sana'a, which the group seized a year ago. So far, they appear to have made few gains.’¹⁰

4.1.9 On 15 December 2015 talks facilitated by the Special Envoy and attended by 24 Yemeni representatives and advisors began with the announcement by the UN Special Envoy for Yemen that parties had agreed a cessation of hostilities. The UN news centre reported that ‘UN experts are working with the delegations present to provide support to develop agreements which improve humanitarian access and delivery and to aid in the development of a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire.’¹¹ Yemen later threatened to expel a UN Representative in Yemen working for OHCHR, claiming that ‘Office had not paid enough attention to the situation in Taiz, and that it issued press releases with “incomplete information.”’¹²

4.1.10 In its February 2016 report *Yemen: Is Peace Possible?* the International Crisis Group reported: ‘Each side’s commitment to UN-led peace talks is lukewarm. Neither is defeated or exhausted; both believe they can make additional military gains; and neither has been willing to make the compromises required to end the violence. The structure of talks, too, is problematic, with Saudi Arabia, a core belligerent, conspicuously absent. ... The immediate future looks bleak. The war has devastated an already weak

September 2015 <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2015/09/02/uk-yemen-security-sanaa-idUKKCN0R21XG20150902?feedType=RSS&feedName=worldNews> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

¹⁰ The Telegraph: ‘Yemen President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi returns to Aden after 6 months exile’ 22 September 2015

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/yemen/11882780/Yemen-president-Abd-Rabbu-Mansour-Hadi-returns-to-Aden-after-six-month-exile.html> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

¹¹ UN News Centre, Yemen: UN-sponsored peace talks kick off as ceasefire goes into effect, 15 December 2015, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52818#.VpOVhPm8PyM> [date accessed 11 January 2016]

¹² UN News Centre, Yemen: UN rights chief urges government to reverse decision to expel envoy from country, 8 January 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52961#.VpOgBfm8PyM> [date accessed 11 January 2016]

infrastructure, opened vast opportunities for AQAP and IS to expand and widened intraYemeni political, regional and confessional divide.’¹³

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5. Protagonists

5.1.1 A March 2015 BBC news article reported on who was fighting whom in Yemen. The report noted that

‘The main fight is between forces loyal to the beleaguered President, Abdrabbuh Mansour Hadi, and those allied to Zaidi Shia rebels known as Houthis, who forced Mr Hadi to flee the capital Sanaa in February.’

‘Yemen's security forces have split loyalties, with some units backing Mr Hadi, and others the Houthis and Mr Hadi's predecessor Ali Abdullah Saleh, who has remained politically influential. Mr Hadi is also supported in the predominantly Sunni south of the country by militia known as Popular Resistance Committees and local tribesmen.’

‘Both President Hadi and the Houthis are opposed by al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which has staged numerous deadly attacks from its strongholds in the south and south-east.’

‘The picture is further complicated by the emergence in late 2014 of a Yemen affiliate of the jihadist group Islamic State, which seeks to eclipse AQAP and claims it carried out a series of suicide bombings in Sanaa in March 2015.’

‘After rebel forces closed in on the president's southern stronghold of Aden in late March, a coalition led by Saudi Arabia responded to a request by Mr Hadi to intervene and launched air strikes on Houthi targets. The coalition comprises five Gulf Arab states and Jordan, Egypt, Morocco and Sudan.’¹⁴

5.1.2 Janes reported in January 2016 that:

‘The worsening security situation in Yemen, the erosion of central authority and the fragmentation of the Yemeni army, will likely continue to give Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) unrestricted freedom of manoeuvre. [...] With military units continuing to show unwillingness to confront AQAP and halt its advances, the group will most likely continue to co-opt local tribes, using the pretext of being the sole force able to challenge the Houthi, and provide social services and some form of proto-governance. As there is no effective ground fighting force in Yemen able to check AQAP's advances, US unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) drone raids or Saudi airstrikes are currently the only means of countering the group.’

¹³ International Crisis Group Yemen, is Peace Possible? Middle East Report N°167 9 February 2016 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Yemen/167-yemen-is-peace-possible.pdf> (date accessed 23 February 2016)

¹⁴ BBC News, Yemen crisis: Who is fighting whom? 26 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-29319423> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

'However, AQAP's gradual merger with local tribes and a security vacuum that is likely to continue in coming months are likely to minimise the impact of airstrikes against the group's militants. The group will be likely to continue to remain unchecked on the ground, thereby expanding its territorial presence and attack capability in other provinces, such as Shabwa, Lahij, Abyan, and Marib. AQAP's ability to co-opt further tribes and hold control over territory will probably be dependent on the group's capacity to provide money, social outreach programmes, and integration into local government through local tribal networks. As such, armed raids targeting banks, post offices, and army bases are likely to increase in frequency in southern cities such as Aden, Tarim, Seiyun, Ash Shihr, Shibam, and Ataq.'

'Meanwhile, the Islamic State claimed its first mass-casualty suicide bombings targeting Arab coalition forces in Aden on 6 October 2015. From March 2015 to October 2015, the Islamic State wilaya of Sanaa also claimed at least 11 attacks on mosques frequented by Shia worshippers in Sanaa, which indicate how the group, currently active in seven Yemeni provinces, is gradually increasing its operational capabilities. Competition between AQAP and the Islamic State is also likely to translate into an increase in major mass-casualty attacks targeting security forces, Houthi positions, public places, mosques, hotels, and the residual Western presence in the country.'¹⁵

5.1.3 In its February 2016 report the International Crisis Group stated:

The U.S., UK and France have lent support to the war effort, even as they harbour reservations regarding the conflict's necessity and are concerned about its possible duration and unintended consequences, particularly the near-catastrophic humanitarian crisis (bordering on famine) and uncontrolled spread of violent jihadi groups such as the Yemeni franchises of al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (IS).

... After nearly a year of combat, no side is close to a decisive military victory. Huthi/ Saleh fighters are ensconced in the Zaydi northern highlands, while the Saudi-led coalition and its Yemeni allies are strongest in Shafei (Sunni) areas in the south and east.

'As the latter have pushed the Huthi/Saleh front out of southern territories, where they were largely viewed as northern invaders, a range of armed groups, including al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) and southern separatists, have moved in to take their place. If the Saudi-led coalition succeeds in capturing additional territory in the north, which it appears determined to do, the result is likely to be a protracted, bloody battle producing additional chaos and fragmentation. For its part, the Huthi/Saleh bloc is significantly complicating peace prospects by increasing cross-border

¹⁵ Janes, Sentinel Country Risk Assessments, Yemen, Security, 13 January 2016, available by subscription (date accessed 2 February 2016)

attacks into Saudi Arabia, a move that makes it more difficult for the kingdom to halt the conflict when it cannot boast a clear military victory.¹⁶

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6. Security Situation

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Reuters noted on 5 January 2016 that 'nearly 6,000 people have been killed since the Saudi coalition entered the Yemeni conflict in March, almost half of them civilians. The war has exacerbated hunger and disease in Yemen, the Arabian Peninsula's poorest country.'¹⁷

6.1.2 The FCO observed in its travel advice for UK nationals up to date as of 26 January 2016 that:

'President Hadi escaped Houthi-imposed house arrest on 20 February 2015 and has now established a government-in-exile in Riyadh. On 25 March 2015 a coalition, led by Saudi Arabia, began air strikes in Yemen following the request for support from President Hadi to deter continued Houthi aggression. Airstrikes continue throughout the country and clashes continue across the country between competing forces. Reports of violence, reprisal killings, looting and human rights abuses continue across the country. Politically motivated demonstrations continue to take place across Yemen. There have been injuries and deaths at some demonstrations. There is the potential for increased tensions on Fridays. Efforts are underway to bring Yemeni parties to the conflict into UN-brokered peace talks. The political and security situation remains uncertain and volatile.'¹⁸

6.1.3 The same source noted: 'Given the current political and security situation, there's limited government control over parts of the country with Houthi or Al-Qaeda dominance in some areas. The political situation is uncertain and the threat of a further escalation of violence and disorder remains.'¹⁹

6.1.4 The FCO's travel advice for UK citizens for Yemen updated on 19 January 2016 stated:

'Since 25 March, Saudi Arabia has been leading coalition airstrikes against Houthi and pro-Saleh targets in Yemen in response to a request for support from President Hadi. Heavy fighting continues across the country, which has

¹⁶ International Crisis Group Yemen, is Peace Possible? Middle East Report N°167 9 February 2016 <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~/media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iran%20Gulf/Yemen/167-yemen-is-peace-possible.pdf> (date accessed 23 February 2016)

¹⁷ Reuters, Yemen war intensifies amid mounting regional tension, 5 January 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-idUSKBN0UJ0RQ20160105> [date accessed 25 January 2015]

¹⁸ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security updated 19 January 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

¹⁹ FCO, Yemen Travel Advice: Safety & Security updated 19 January 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen/safety-and-security> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

exacerbated the humanitarian crisis and damaged key infrastructure. Access to food, clean water, fuel and medical supplies is difficult throughout Yemen. There is a high risk of being caught in indiscriminate gunfire or shelling.²⁰

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6.2 Southern Yemen

6.2.1 Southern Yemen includes the governorates of Aden, Ibb, Al Bayda, Al Dhaleh, Lahij, Abyan and Taiz.

6.2.2 Congressional Research Service, Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention, 2 October 2015 noted that:

‘As of early October 2015, the Saudi-led Arab Coalition has succeeded in uprooting fighters from the northern Yemen-based, Zaydi Shiite Ansar Allah movement (Partisans of God, aka Houthi movement) and their allies from Aden and most of southern Yemen. What began as primarily an air campaign (referred to by the Saudis as Operation Storm of Determination or Decisive Storm) has evolved into a conventional ground conflict, with thousands of Arab coalition troops on the ground. Currently, the coalition and Houthis are battling in Taiz and Marib provinces, and airstrikes continue against targets around the capital Sana’a and other Houthi-controlled areas.’²¹

6.2.3 Critical Threats:Yemen Crisis situation reports 26 August 2015 noted that:

‘AQAP against government / coalition forces in Aden, as well as efforts by the coalition to support the reinstatement of law and order in areas under government (and coalition backed) control: ‘AQAP and ISIS conducted military and political activities in Aden despite the Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi government’s claim of securing the governorate. AQAP militants attacked key government and military buildings and seized two districts in Aden on August 22 before withdrawing the next day... Saudi-led coalition forces started efforts to curb southern jihadist activities by implementing police training and equipment programs to rebuild the Yemeni security forces and redeploying coalition troops to the recently liberated territories.’²²

6.2.4 The same source also stated on 20 January 2016 that:

‘The Hadi government’s inability to secure Aden city exemplifies the challenges that lay ahead. Local militant groups, including AQAP, ISIS, secessionists, and others, continue to operate in the city and will attempt to prevent the central government’s reconstitution. Militants, probably AQAP, attempted to assassinate Aden’s security chief Shalal Ali Shaye’a on January 17, less than two weeks after Shaye’a and the governors of Aden

²⁰ FCO, Travel Advice: Yemen, updated 19 January 2016, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

²¹ Congressional Research Service, Yemen: Civil War and Regional Intervention, 2 October 2015 <http://fas.org/sqp/crs/mideast/R43960.pdf> [date accessed 20 January 2016]

²² Critical Threats:Yemen Crisis situation reports 26 August 2015 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-august-26-2015> [date accessed 27 January 2016]

and Lahij survived a similar attack. Militants, possibly secessionists or Islamists, also sabotaged an oil pipeline at Aden's oil refinery on January 15, two weeks after pro-Hadi security forces clashed with suspected Islamist militants for control of the nearby port. Aden's insecurity will probably keep Hadi's government weak, giving factions time to position themselves favorably for Yemen's political future.²³

6.2.5 In January 2016 Yemen Post reported that:

'Vice President and Premier Khalid Bahah and a number of ministers and officials within the cabinet returned to Yemen's temporary capital of Aden on Monday, local officials said.[...] They have come back to resume duties from Yemen with priority to be given to restoring security and stability as well as rebuilding the regions that had been damaged and destroyed during the battles with the Houthi militants, the officials said.[...] Meanwhile, Aden is still facing huge security challenges including a rise of targeted killings and presence of militant groups such as Al-Qaeda ISIS. In middle, eastern and northern regions, the battles between the pro-government and Houthi forces are continuing coinciding with escalating airstrike by the Saudi-led coalition. The government with support from the coalition retook southern regions from the Houthis in mid-2014. The coalition launched a military intervention in Yemen in late March. Still, some Houthi militants are in some areas of the province of Shabwa where sporadic battles have been reported recently.'²⁴

6.2.6 Aljezeera reported in January 2016 that

'The government of President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi has been struggling with lawlessness in the key port (of Aden) since militia members, backed by a Saudi-led Sunni Arab coalition, drove the Iran-allied Shia Houthis out in July.

'Yemeni authorities have announced a dusk-to-dawn curfew in Aden starting on Monday following a night of gun battles between fighters and government forces that killed at least 12 people from both sides, according to a local government spokesman.'²⁵

6.2.7 Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report noted that:

'A string of assassination attempts continued in Aden, following weeks of killings by local militant groups. Gunmen killed a senior security official and four others in Aden on January 24, and unsuccessfully targeted a UAE military convoy the day before. The Director of Criminal Investigations in Aden escaped a car bomb attack in the al Ayadat area in Aden, one week

²³ AEI, Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report, 20 January 2016, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-january-20-2016> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

²⁴ Yemen Post, Bahah, officials return from GCC to Yemen temporary capital Aden, 25 January 2016, <http://yemenpost.net/Detail123456789.aspx?ID=3&SubID=8386&MainCat=3> [date accessed 27 January 2016]

²⁵ Aljezeera, Yemen imposes curfew in Aden after clashes, 4 January 2016 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/01/yemen-imposes-curfew-aden-deadly-battle-160104085826576.html> [date accessed 20 January 2016]

after a similar assassination attempt on Aden's police chief. Local actors will continue to destabilize Aden and undermine the Hadi government's efforts to establish itself as Yemen's future unity government.

'Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) may be expanding the areas under its control into Lahij governorate, north of Aden. The coalition may attempt to limit AQAP's growth, but is unlikely to challenge AQAP's safe havens while remaining entrenched in the anti-al Houthi fight.'

'Islamist militants possibly linked to AQAP seized control of a city within kilometers of key coalition sites. The militants took control of government buildings and other areas in Lahij's regional capital al Hawta on January 25, blowing up a police station and establishing roadside checkpoints in the process... This group likely is linked to the militants who briefly took control of al Hawta in March 2015 and were labeled as Ansar al Sharia, AQAP's insurgent arm, at the time. Al Hawta is only about 40 kilometers from Yemeni President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi's de facto capital in Aden and only 10 kilometers from al Anad airbase, a strategic military base for pro-Hadi military operations... The return of Salafi-jihadi militants to al Hawta underscores the coalition-backed government's limited control in Yemen. If the group is linked to AQAP, it also marks a westward expansion of AQAP's zone of control, which extends through Abyan, parts of al Bayda and Shabwah, and into Hadramawt.'²⁶

6.2.8 Voice of America noted in a report from 1 February 2016 that:

'Al-Qaida's Yemeni branch seized another town on Monday, setting up checkpoints at its entrances and besieging government buildings before dawn after days of fighting with southern separatists, officials said. The capture of Azzan marks the latest advance for al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, or AQAP, which has exploited the chaos of Yemen's civil war to expand its reach. The group captured the southern port city of Mukalla last year and has seized a number of towns as it has moved west toward Yemen's second city of Aden, where the internationally backed government is based.'²⁷

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6.3 Central and northern Yemen

6.3.1 Critical Threats Yemen situation report dated 20 January 2016 noted that:

'The Saudi-led coalition remains focused on degrading the al Houthi-Saleh coalition's strength in order to re-establish a pro-Saudi central Yemeni government in Sana'a. The coalition launched numerous airstrikes on al Houthi-Saleh targets in and around Sana'a city from January 17-18 and incurred high civilian casualties. The coalition increased the frequency of its

²⁶ AEI, Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report, 27 January 2016
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-january-27-2016> [date accessed 2 February 2016]

²⁷ Voice of America, Al-Qaida Seizes Southern Yemeni Town, 1 February 2016
<http://www.voanews.com/content/al-qaida-seizes-southern-yemeni-town/3171438.html> [date accessed 2 February 2016]

attacks in late December 2015 and early January 2016 in response to al Houthi-Saleh cross-border attacks, including ballistic missile launches. The frequency of ballistic missile attacks has dropped significantly in the last two weeks, indicating that the coalition may have succeeded in degrading some of the al Houthi-Saleh forces' missile launch capabilities. However, the coalition's bombing of Sana'a has continued, even as coalition-backed forces remain fixed along current frontlines. The coalition will likely continue to target positions in the al Houthi-held capital as the stalemate continues on the ground, ultimately prolonging the conflict and continuing to distract from the counter-terrorism fight.²⁸

6.3.2 Human Rights Watch reported that:

'Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces airdropped cluster bombs on residential neighborhoods in Yemen's capital, Sanaa, early on January 6, 2016. It is not yet clear whether the attacks caused civilian casualties, but the inherently indiscriminate nature of cluster munitions makes such attacks serious violations of the laws of war. The deliberate or reckless use of cluster munitions in populated areas amounts to a war crime.'²⁹

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6.4 Levels and nature of violence

6.4.1 The United Nations recently reported that civilians are suffering a "terrible toll" in the fighting, with casualties now topping 8,100, with nearly 2,800 of them killed.³⁰

6.4.2 BBC news website reported that:

'The toll on Yemen's population and infrastructure has been horrific. According to human rights groups both sides have committed abuses, some of which may amount to war crimes. More than 2,500 civilians are reported to have been killed, most by air strikes. The Saudi-led coalition stands accused of using at least four types of cluster bombs and dropping bombs on civilian homes, hospitals, factories and bottling plants. Saudi Arabia insists it only attacks carefully chosen military targets but there have been numerous accounts from Yemenis on the ground saying residential areas have been attacked, far from any Houthi positions'.³¹

6.4.3 The same source reported: 'The Houthi rebels are accused of shelling residential areas indiscriminately, of laying unmarked mines and of imprisoning members of the population without charge. Food distribution has

²⁸ AEI, Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report, 20 January 2016, <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-january-20-2016> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

²⁹ Human Rights Watch, Yemen: Coalition Drops Cluster Bombs in Capital, 7 January 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/569567195723.html> [accessed 19 January 2016]

³⁰ UN News Service, UN chief 'deeply concerned' about intensification of airstrikes and ground fighting in Yemen, 8 January 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/569802917cc6.html> [accessed 19 January 2016]

³¹ BBC news, Torn in two: Yemen divided, 24 December 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35160532> [date accessed 19 January 2016]

been hampered by the fighting and by a partial blockade of Yemen's ports and aid agencies warn of the growing risk of malnutrition and disease if the war continues much longer.³²

6.4.4 The same source noted in a different report that:

'The Saudi-led coalition fighting the Houthi rebel movement in Yemen has targeted civilians with air strikes in a "widespread and systematic" manner, a leaked UN report says... More than 5,800 people have been killed in fighting since March, and more than 80% of the population is in dire need of food, water and other aid, the UN says. Not a single humanitarian pause to alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people has been fully observed by any Yemeni party or by the coalition," the report says. The UN's experts documented 119 coalition sorties that violated international law, the report says, many of which involved multiple strikes on civilian objects. They also found that civilians fleeing coalition air strikes had been chased and shot at by helicopters.'³³

6.4.5 A United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) / Action on Armed Violence (AOAV) report released in September 2015, covering the period 1 January to 31 July 2015, stated that:

'The spiralling violence in Yemen in 2015 has been characterised by the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas. All parties to the conflict have repeatedly used heavy explosive weapons in fighting since March, including in populated areas. In addition to aerial bombing in the capital Sana'a and other locations across the country, southern governorates in particular have seen heavy ground fighting with rockets and mortars between Houthi militants and government allied fighters. As a further threat to the protection of civilians, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) have carried out deadly bombings as they take advantage of the insecurity gripping Yemen.'

'Civilians have borne the brunt of explosive violence in Yemen in 2015. AOAV recorded 124 incidents of explosive violence in Yemen between 1 January and 31 July 2015... In these incidents, a total of 5,239 deaths and injuries from explosive weapon use were recorded.

'Of these, 4,493 were civilians (1,363 civilian deaths and 3,130 civilian injuries). This means that civilians have made up 86 per cent of deaths and injuries that AOAV has recorded from explosive weapons in Yemen between 1 January and 31 July 2015.

'The intensity of explosive violence in the country has meant that more civilian deaths and injuries from explosive weapons were recorded in Yemen

³² BBC news, Torn in two: Yemen divided, 24 December 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35160532> [date accessed 19 January 2016]

³³ BBC News, Yemen conflict: Saudi-led coalition targeting civilians, UN says, 27 January 2016 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-35423282> [date accessed 2 February 2016]

during the first seven months of 2015 than in any other country in the world.³⁴

- 6.4.6 Of the civilian casualties, 60% were as a result of air-launched explosives (i.e from aircraft); 23% ground-launched; and 17% improvised explosive devices. The casualties were mostly in the largest urban areas, with the majority in Sana'a and surrounding districts (53%; 2,361 recorded casualties (out of a governorate population of over 1 million³⁵)); 19% in Aden (out of a population of 700,000³⁶); 10% in Hajjah (with a population of over 1.7 million³⁷) and 9% in Taiz (with a population of over 2.8 million³⁸).³⁹
- 6.4.7 In its November 2015 Humanitarian Needs Overview, UNOHCA stated: 'The conduct of hostilities has been brutal since fighting escalated in mid-March. As of 16 October, health facilities had reported 32,307 casualties (including 5,604 deaths) – an average of 153 injuries or deaths every day. These figures are likely significant underestimates, given that many people are unable to access health facilities. ... As of 31 July, initial analysis estimated that 86 per cent of civilian casualties were due to explosive weapons. OHCHR has verified 8,875 reports of human rights and abuses since mid-March – an average of 43 violations per day. Front-line areas –including Aden, Sa'ada, Taiz and areas along the Saudi border – have been devastated by sustained fighting, shelling or air strikes.'⁴⁰
- 6.4.8 Critical Threats, 27 January 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report reported that: 'The UN Panel of Experts report on Yemen described widespread airstrikes on civilian targets. The UN report alleged that al Houthi-Saleh forces as positioning themselves within residential areas and using civilians as shields. It also attributed 60 percent (2,682) of the civilian casualties to air-launched explosive weapons. Coalition airstrikes continued in Sana'a and northern Yemen this week as al Houthi forces resumed cross-border attacks on Saudi Arabia. Coalition airstrikes hit dozens of targets in Sana'a and Sa'ada, as well as Ma'rib, killing a Doctors Without Borders ambulance driver in Sa'ada in the process.'⁴¹

³⁴ UNOCHA / 'Action on Armed Violence, State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen' p1, September 2015, https://docs.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/Yemen_EWIPA_report.pdf accessed 14 October 2015

³⁵ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

³⁶ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

³⁷ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

³⁸ Government of Yemen, Ministry of Public Health and Population , 2013 Annual Health Statistical Report, p18, undated, <http://www.mophp-ye.org/english/index.html> accessed 14 October 2015

³⁹ UNOCHA / Action on Armed Violence, [State of crisis: explosive weapons in Yemen](#), p3, September 2015, accessed 14 October 2015

⁴⁰ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 22 November 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/2016-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar> [date accessed 23 February 2016]

⁴¹ AEI, Critical Threats, 2016 Yemen Crisis Situation Report, 27 January 2016 <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-january-27-2016> [date accessed 2

6.4.9 Human Rights Watch noted in their annual report for 2016 that:

‘Before and since the coalition air campaign, Houthi and allied forces have used artillery rockets in indiscriminate attacks in the southern cities of Taizz, Lahj, al-Dale`a, and Aden, killing dozens of civilians. Houthis have also launched artillery rockets into the southern Saudi Arabian border city of Najran and areas of Jizan province.’

‘Houthi forces laid numerous landmines, including banned antipersonnel mines in Yemen’s southern and eastern governorates of Abyan, Aden, Marib, Lahj and Taizz since July. Landmines and explosive remnants of war killed at least 23 people and wounded others, including two deminers, according to Yemeni mine clearance officials, medical professionals, and media reports.’

‘Antivehicle mines accounted for nine of those killed and five injured, although whether the mine is antivehicle or antipersonnel is often not detailed in reporting. Human Rights Watch believes that the actual number of mine victims in Yemen may be much higher.’

‘Human Rights Watch documented dozens of coalition airstrikes that appear to have been unlawfully indiscriminate, causing civilian casualties, some of which may have amounted to war crimes. They include a March 30 airstrike on a camp for internally displaced persons near Yemen’s border with Saudi Arabia that killed at least 29 civilians; a March 31 airstrike on a dairy factory outside Hodaida that killed at least 31 civilians; a May 12 airstrike on a market and neighboring lemon grove in the town of Zabid, south of Hodaida, killing at least 60 civilians; a July 4, airstrike on a village market in Muthalith Ahim, south of the Saudi border, killing at least 65 people; and a July 24 airstrike on homes in the port city of Mokha that killed at least 65 civilians.’

‘In the Houthi’s northern stronghold of Saada, Human Rights Watch examined a dozen coalition airstrikes that destroyed or damaged homes, five markets, a school, and a gas station, but found no evidence of military targets. The strikes killed 59 people, all reportedly civilians, including at least 35 children, between April 6 and May 11.’

‘Human Rights Watch documented the use by coalition forces of three types of cluster munitions in Yemen in 2015, while Amnesty International documented the coalition’s use of a fourth type of cluster munition in November 2015. A fifth type of cluster munition has been used, but the actor responsible is unclear... Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces appear to have used cluster munition rockets in at least seven attacks in Yemen’s northwestern Hajja governorate, killing and wounding dozens of civilians.’

‘In May, following Human Rights Watch’s second report on the use of CBU-105 sensor fuzed weapons in Saada, the Saudi military acknowledged that coalition forces had used the weapon. In August, the Saudi military responded to a new Human Rights Watch report that documented the coalition’s use of M26 cluster munition rockets at least seven times in Hajja

governorate, killing or wounding at least 35 civilians. A Saudi coalition spokesperson denied use of the M26 cluster munition rockets. In August, a US Defense Department official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told media that “the US is aware that Saudi Arabia has used cluster munitions in Yemen.”⁴²

6.4.10 In its 2015/2016 Annual report published in February 2016, Amnesty International stated:

‘While many coalition attacks were directed at military targets, others were indiscriminate, disproportionate or directed against civilian homes and infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, markets and factories, as well as vehicles carrying civilians and humanitarian assistance, killing and injuring thousands of civilians. By the end of the year, the conflict had caused the deaths of more than 2,700 civilians, including hundreds of children, according to the UN, and the forcible displacement of more than 2.5 million people, creating a humanitarian crisis...US forces continued to carry out drone strikes against the armed group al-Qa’ida in the Arabian Peninsula in central and southeastern Yemen, mainly in the governorates of Marib and Hadramawt...

‘The fighting in southern Yemen [in 2015] was marked by indiscriminate attacks in which both sides repeatedly fired imprecise weapons at civilian residential areas, causing civilian deaths and injuries.... Huthi and anti-Huthi armed groups used explosive weapons with wide-area effects, including mortars and artillery shells, when attacking civilian residential areas controlled or contested by their opponents in southern Yemen, killing and injuring civilians. During fighting for control of Aden and Ta’iz, Yemen’s two most populous cities after Sana’a, both sides repeatedly fired explosive weapons with wide-area effects into densely populated civilian areas. They also conducted military operations from civilian residential neighbourhoods, launching attacks from or near homes, schools and hospitals, exposing local civilians to serious risk. The Huthi armed group and their allies laid internationally banned anti-personnel landmines that caused civilian casualties; dozens of civilians were killed or injured by landmines when returning to their homes in the second half of the year after fighting ended in Aden and the surrounding area.’⁴³

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7. Humanitarian situation

7.1 Impact of violence

7.1.1 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, dated 22 November 2015 noted that:

⁴² Human Rights Watch, World Report 2016; Yemen, 27 January 2016 <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2016/country-chapters/yemen> [date accessed 2 February 2016]

⁴³ Amnesty International: Report 2015/16: The state of the world's human rights: Yemen, 23 February 2016 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/2552/2016/en/> [date accessed 24 February 2016]

‘Even before the current crisis, Yemen faced enormous levels of humanitarian need, with 15.9 million people (61 per cent of the population) requiring some kind of humanitarian assistance in late 2014. These needs stemmed from years of poverty, under-development, environmental decline, intermittent conflict, and weak rule of law – including widespread violations of human rights.’⁴⁴

7.1.2 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

‘Escalating conflict has severely exacerbated Yemen’s pre-existing humanitarian crisis. Partners now estimate that 21.2 million people need some kind of humanitarian assistance.’

‘As of late January 2016, health facilities had reported more than 35,000 casualties, including more than 6,100 deaths, since mid-March – an average of 113 casualties per day. Many casualties are believed to be civilians, and partners estimate that eight children are being killed or maimed every day’.

‘Conflict is also driving people from their homes at alarming rates. Partners estimate that 2.5 million people are currently displaced within Yemen, about half of whom are in Taizz, Amran, Hajjah, Sana’a and Abyan governorates.’
‘With continued volatility and insecurity in many parts of Yemen, affected people – including IDPs, host communities and other conflict-affected communities – are increasingly facing challenges to survival. Protection assessments indicate that these challenges include lack of safety, separated families, limited freedom of movement, harassment, child recruitment and gender-based violence. In addition, affected people face limited livelihood opportunities; increasing tensions between displaced and host communities; lost documentation (including birth registration or identity cards needed to access services); issues regarding housing, land and property; and limited access to services.’⁴⁵

7.1.3 The annual report of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has said that: ‘Nearly all parties to the conflict on the ground in Yemen have engaged in widespread child recruitment, with information indicating that four times as many children were recruited in the six-month period from March to September 2015 than in the whole of 2014.’⁴⁶

7.1.4 The NGO “Global Network for Rights and Development” reported to the UN Secretary General in September 2015 that

⁴⁴ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 22 November 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/2016-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

⁴⁵ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

⁴⁶ Annual report of The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 15 February 2016, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/press-release/human-rights-council-report-2016/>

'Hundreds of thousands of children now live in appalling conditions that are largely caused by widespread use of child soldiers, unlawful killing, rape and other acts of sexual violence, abduction, enslavement and forced marriage, displacement and blockage of or obstruction to humanitarian aid, and indiscriminate use of heavy artillery and other deadly weapons. Many of the Yemeni non-state armed groups are exploiting these vulnerabilities of children, including trauma suffered as they are caught in the midst of conflict. ... According to UNICEF, one third of non-state armed militias in Yemen are comprised of minors under the age of 18.'⁴⁷

7.1.5 The UN News Service reported that:

'The ongoing deadly violence in Yemen has left nearly 10 million children facing threats of malnutrition and disease, lack of education, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative to the country warned today, calling for unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need and an end to the conflict.'

"Continuous bombardment and street fighting are exposing children and their families to a deadly combination of violence, disease and deprivation," UNICEF Representative Julien Harneis said, sounding the alarm on behalf of the conflict's most vulnerable.

'According to the UN, more than 700 children have been killed, with more than 1,000 injured since last March. Additionally, about 700 had been forced to become child soldiers.'

'Children, who make up about half of the 2.3 million people in Yemen displaced from their homes, are also struggling to get water on a daily basis, and facing the risk of acute malnutrition and respiratory tract infections. They are also without access to education.'⁴⁸

7.1.6 In its 2015/2016 Annual report published in February 2016, Amnesty International stated that 'The Huthi armed group and its allies, and their pro-government opponents, attacked medical facilities, workers and patients or exposed them to serious risk by using medical facilities or their close vicinity as locations for firing positions or other military activities, particularly during fighting in and around Aden and Ta'iz.'⁴⁹

7.1.7 The same report stated:

'Some coalition attacks targeted key infrastructure, such as bridges and highways. They included attacks in July [2015] that destroyed four bridges on a road linking the Sa'da governorate to Sana'a. Other coalition air strikes

⁴⁷ Written statement to UN Secretary General by the Global Network for Rights and Development (GNRD) Immediate Protection for Children in Yemen, 4 September 2015 <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G15/199/61/PDF/G1519961.pdf?OpenElement> [date accessed 23 February 2016]

⁴⁸ UN News Service, Yemen's war-weary children face 'new year of pain and suffering' – UNICEF official, 12 January 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/56980e485901.html> [accessed 19 January 2016]

⁴⁹ Amnesty International: Report 2015/16: The state of the world's human rights: Yemen, 23 February 2016 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/2552/2016/en/> (date accessed 24 February 2016)

damaged bridges on roads linking Sana'a to Hodeidah and Marib, and Ta'iz to Aden. Some coalition air strikes hit hospitals and other medical facilities in Sa'da governorate, injuring patients and medical workers. On 26 October [2015], the Saudi Arabia-led coalition destroyed a Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) supported hospital in Hayden in Sa'da, injuring seven medical workers. MSF said that another of its clinics in Ta'iz was struck by coalition air strikes on 2 December, wounding nine people, including two MSF staff. On 4 September, coalition aircraft reportedly bombed al-Sh'ara hospital at Razih in Sa'da governorate. According to MSF personnel who visited the site soon after, there was no evidence that the hospital was used for military purposes. MSF said the attack killed six patients and injured others. In order to deny supplies to Huthis and their allied forces, the coalition imposed a partial aerial and naval blockade. This severely curtailed the import and provision of fuel and other essentials, obstructing access to food, water, humanitarian assistance and medical supplies, exacerbating the worsening humanitarian crisis.⁵⁰

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7.2 Displacement and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

7.2.1 There were almost 27 million people in Yemen in 2015'. [...] with 'approximately 32% of the total population lives in urban areas'.⁵¹

7.2.2 In December 2015, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre reported: 'The total number of more than 2.5 million IDPs is unprecedented in the country's history of displacement, and IDMC estimates that at least 85 per cent of these IDPs were displaced during 2015.'⁵²

7.2.3 UNOCHA's population movement report of December 2015 noted that:

'The Task Force on Population Movement (TFPM), led by UNHCR and IOM and in collaboration with several operational partners, in its sixth report has determined that there were 2,509,068 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Yemen. These figures point to an increase of nine per cent since 15 October 2015, and an eight fold increase since March 2015. While displacement has decreased in the southern governorates, where there have been large scale returns in recent months, it has increased significantly in the northern governorates, consistent with the patterns of conflict.'

'The five governorates most affected by the conflict – Taizz, Amran, Hajjah, Sana'a and Abyan – account for more than 1.2 million of the 2.5 million IDPs or 48 per cent of all IDPs in Yemen. Taizz Governorate has over 392,000 IDPs - the highest of any other governorate. Intensified hostilities have also

⁵⁰ Amnesty International: Report 2015/16: The state of the world's human rights: Yemen, 23 February 2016 <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/pol10/2552/2016/en/> (date accessed 24 February 2016)

⁵¹ Janes, Sentinel Country Risk Assessments, Yemen, Demography, 13 January 2016, available by subscription (date accessed 20 January 2016)

⁵² UNHCR, Regional Refugee and Migrant Response Plan, 22 February 2016, ⁵² IDMC Yemen IDP Figures Analysis <http://data.unhcrwww.internal-displacement.org/middle-east-and-north-africa/yemen/regional.phpfigures-analysis> [date accessed 24 February 2016]

increased displacement in Sana'a and Dhamar governorates. At the same time, IOM reports that 210,000 displaced people have returned to their homes in Aden over recent months. However, displacement is only one aspect of this crisis and the needs in Aden and other southern governorates remain high, with many returnees in need of assistance to rebuild their homes and restart their lives.

'In responding to the needs of IDPs and other conflict-affected communities, the Shelter/Non Food Items (NFI) and Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, led by IOM/UNHCR, have assisted over 362,157 persons with NFIs, 126,698 persons with emergency shelter materials/kits, 14,854 persons with tents, and 13,085 persons with cash assistance for rental subsidies. Cluster partners have also provided psychosocial and legal assistance to individuals with specific needs.'⁵³

7.2.4 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

'With no camps for internally displaced persons (IDPs), displacement has led to a dispersed population that is often difficult to identify or assess for vulnerability or specific needs. Many IDPs are living with host families, placing additional strain on scarce resources, or renting shelter, which becomes challenging as rental prices increase and displacement becomes protracted. Some IDPs are seeking shelter in public buildings – including 169 schools as of January 2016 – or in the open, although precise numbers are not available. Displacement and hosting IDPs are significant drivers of needs for food, water and other basic assistance – particularly shelter, healthcare, education and essential household items.'⁵⁴

7.2.5 In February 2016 UNHCR reported

'Displacement figures continue to rise in Taizz governorate, which now hosts the highest number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the country. At approximately 400,000 this accounts for 16 per cent of the current total of 2.5 million IDPs...The humanitarian situation in Yemen remains critical, with an estimated 21.2 million people – equivalent to 82 per cent of the population – in need of some kind of humanitarian assistance, and the conflict continues to force families to flee their homes across 21 of the 22 Yemeni Governorates.'⁵⁵

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⁵³ UNOCHA, The Task Force on Population Movement Report: 2.5 million IDPs as a result of conflict in Yemen, 18 December 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/task-force-population-movement-report-25-million-idps-result-conflict-yemen-enar> [date accessed 25 January 2016]

⁵⁴ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

⁵⁵ UNHCR UNHCR delivers vital aid to Yemenis in embattled Taizz, 16 February 2016 <http://www.unhcr.org/56c3320f6.html> [date accessed 23 February 2016]

7.3 Food

7.3.1 UN News Centre noted that: 'Yemen essentially depends on commercial food and fuel imports to meet the basic needs of the population. More than 90 per cent of food is imported.⁵⁶ 'Imports are essential as only 4 per cent of the country's land is arable and only a fraction of that is currently used for food production. Fuel shortages and restrictions on imports, [...] have reduced the availability of essential food commodities and caused food and fuel prices to soar since conflict escalated in March 2015.'⁵⁷

7.3.2 The BBC also reported in December 2015 'A lack of fuel, coupled with insecurity and damage to markets and roads, have also prevented supplies from being distributed.'⁵⁸

7.3.3 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

'14.4 million people are now food insecure. Severely food insecure people – estimated at 7.6 million – require immediate emergency food assistance.'

'Nutrition partners estimate that 2 million acutely malnourished children and pregnant or lactating women need treatment, and an additional 1 million children require preventive services. About 320,000 children are currently suffering from severe acute malnutrition, meaning they are nine times likelier to die than their peers.'⁵⁹

7.3.4 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, dated 22 November 2015 reported:

'Food insecurity is increasing due to sporadic availability of essential food commodities, insufficient fuel, lack of income or employment opportunities, and disruption of markets and trade. Wheat prices have increased by an average of 47 per cent since the crisis began, with localized increases as high as 100 per cent in Taiz and more than 50 per cent in Lahj and Al Hudaydah. Fuel prices are on average more than 250 per cent higher than before the crisis, raising costs of commercial food distribution, which in turn is contributing to food shortages and higher prices. Although food availability has improved in many locations since June, basic commodities remain only sporadically available in 18 of 22 governorates as of mid- October. Rising prices and sporadic availability mean that food remains out of reach for many people, whether due to its absence from markets or unaffordability. At the same time, agricultural production is falling due to poor rains and the high cost and uneven availability of agricultural inputs (seed, fertilizer, farm

⁵⁶ United Nations General Assembly, Situation of human rights in Yemen, 7 September 2015, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/RegularSessions/Session30/Documents/A_HRC_30_31_ENG.docx [date accessed 25 January 2016]

⁵⁷ UN News Centre, More than half Yemen's population face hunger amid ongoing strife, UN agency warns, 28 January 2016 <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=53111#.Vq9nRfm8PyM> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁵⁸ BBC News, Yemen crisis: How bad is the humanitarian situation?, 15 December 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34011187> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁵⁹ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

tools, animal feed, fuel for irrigation pumps etc.). Humanitarian partners are projecting a 30 per cent reduction in crop harvests in key agricultural areas in the coming seasons.⁶⁰

7.3.5 Ten of Yemen's 22 provinces have been classified by the WFP at the "emergency" level for food security - one step below "famine".⁶¹

7.3.6 UN News Service noted that: 'Taiz is one of 10 governorates - out of Yemen's 22 governorates - in the grip of severe food insecurity at 'Emergency' level - one step below famine on the five-point Integrated Food Security Phase Classification scale. At least one in five households in the area do not have enough food to lead a healthy life, have lost their livelihoods and are facing life-threatening rates of acute malnutrition.'⁶²

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7.4 Water, sanitation and hygiene

7.4.1 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

'19.4 million people in Yemen require assistance to ensure access to safe drinking water and sanitation, of whom 9.8 million are in need as a direct result of the conflict. Commercial water trucks – the main source of water for many – are reportedly between two and four times more expensive and are in some cases unable to enter affected areas due to insecurity or interference by parties to the conflict. Sanitation is deteriorating, with uncollected solid waste in frontline areas posing a serious risk of public health crisis.'⁶³

7.4.2 The Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien in his statement to the Security Council on Yemen on 16 February 2016 said that: 'Water infrastructure serving at least 900,000 people has been either damaged or destroyed by airstrikes, artillery and rockets. For instance last week, the water reservoir serving 40,000 people was completely destroyed, reportedly by an airstrike, in the capital, Sana'a City.'⁶⁴

7.4.3 BBC news reported that:

⁶⁰ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Needs Overview, 22 November 2015, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/2016-humanitarian-needs-overview-enar> [date accessed 23 February 2016]

⁶¹ BBC News, Yemen crisis: How bad is the humanitarian situation?, 15 December 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34011187> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁶² UN News Service, In breakthrough, UN agency delivers supplies to besieged districts inside Yemen's Taiz city, 25 January 2016, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/56a87e5c40d.html> [accessed 27 January 2016]

⁶³ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

⁶⁴ Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien's statement to the Security Council on Yemen, 16 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-stephen-4>

'The restrictions on imports of fuel - essential for maintaining the water supply - combined with damage to pumps and sewage treatment facilities, also mean that 19.3 million people now lack access to safe drinking water or sanitation.'

'People have been forced to rely on untreated water supplies and unprotected wells, placing them at risk of life-threatening illnesses such as diarrhoea and cholera.'⁶⁵

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7.5 Health

7.5.1 WHO noted that: 'Since March 2015, the conflict in Yemen has intensified, pushing the country's health system to the brink of collapse. Insecurity, power shortages and a lack of fuel to power generators and ambulances have led to the closure of almost 1 in 4 health facilities.'⁶⁶

7.5.2 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

'Deteriorating health services have left 14.1 million people seeking scarce health services from ever fewer facilities, most of which are under-resourced and over-burdened. Medical supplies for mass casualty management and essential medicine for chronic diseases are in increasingly short supply. Girls and women – especially pregnant women and women in rural areas – are particularly disadvantaged by a lack of female health service providers. More than 520,000 pregnant women lack access to reproductive health services.'⁶⁷

The Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien in his statement to the Security Council on Yemen on 16 February 2016 said that:

'Chronic drug shortages, unpaid salaries, and conflict related destruction means that around 14 million Yemenis do not have sufficient access to healthcare services. Since March last year, nearly 600 health facilities closed due to damage, shortages of critical supplies or lack of health workers. Nearly 220 of these facilities used to provide treatment for acute malnutrition. In January alone, at least three health facilities were damaged - one hospital in Sa'ada Governorate and two facilities in Nahim district of Sana'a Governorate.'⁶⁸

⁶⁵ BBC News, Yemen crisis: How bad is the humanitarian situation?, 15 December 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-34011187> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁶⁶ World Health Organisation, Insecurity drives health workers out of Yemen, January 2016, <http://www.who.int/features/2016/yemen-health-insecurity/en/> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁶⁷ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

⁶⁸ Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien's statement to the Security Council on Yemen, 16 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-stephen-4>

- 7.5.3 UNOCHA states that ‘The high number of conflict-related injuries illustrates the need for trauma care in the face of dwindling medical supplies. [...]. As of mid October [2015], at least 69 health facilities have been damaged or destroyed by parties to the conflict; eight health workers have been killed and 20 injured.’⁶⁹
- 7.5.4 The World Health Organisation, Insecurity drives health workers out of Yemen dated January 2016 noted that: ‘Currently, the country has around 3 doctors per 10 000 people - compared with Switzerland, for example, which has 40 doctors for the same number of people.’⁷⁰
- 7.5.5 The same source also noted: Many health workers have already fled the country. Supplies of medicines and medical supplies have been disrupted. Limited funding is taking a toll on the Government’s capacity to continue operating health facilities and patients’ ability to pay for services.⁷¹
- 7.5.6 Time noted in an article titled ‘Hospitals Are Under Fire in Yemen’s War’, 29 January 2016 that:
- ‘Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF) maintains constant dialogue with both the Saudi-led coalition and the Houthi-led militias, providing GPS coordinates of medical projects and calling on them to fulfill their obligations to preserve access to medical services. But between March and November of last year, bombs were dropped on or near medical facilities nearly 100 times, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross. The three MSF-supported medical structures hit were known and clearly marked.’⁷²
- 7.5.7 Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Yemen: Health facilities under attack, MSF wants answers, 25 January 2016 stated that:
- ‘MSF medical activities in Yemen have come under attack four times in less than three months, each incident more serious than the last. The first took place on 26 October [2015], when fighter jets from the Saudi-led coalition repeatedly bombed a hospital in Haydan district, Saada Province. An MSF mobile clinic was then hit by an airstrike on 2 December in Taiz’s Al Houban district, wounding eight people including two MSF staff and killing one person nearby. On 10 January [2016] the MSF-supported Shira hospital came under attack in an incident that killed six people and injured at least seven, most of them medical staff and patients. On 21 January, an MSF

⁶⁹ UNOCHA, Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 5, 13 November 2015
<http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-5-issued-13-november-2015> [date accessed 26 January 2016]

⁷⁰ World Health Organisation, Insecurity drives health workers out of Yemen, January 2016,
<http://www.who.int/features/2016/yemen-health-insecurity/en/> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁷¹ World Health Organisation, Insecurity drives health workers out of Yemen, January 2016,
<http://www.who.int/features/2016/yemen-health-insecurity/en/> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁷² Time, Hospitals Are Under Fire in Yemen’s War, 29 January 2016,
<http://time.com/4200429/doctors-without-borders-yemen-war/> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

ambulance was hit and its driver killed in a series of airstrikes that wounded dozens and killed at least six in Saada Governorate.⁷³

7.5.8 Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders' (MSF), Crisis Update: Access to healthcare December 23, 2015 noted the following:

'MSF has a total of 2,102 staff working in the country: 97 international staff and 2,005 Yemeni staff. Currently, MSF is working in Aden, Al-Dhale', Taiz, Saada, Amran, Hajjah, Ibb and Sana'a, managing and providing urgent support to various hospitals and health centers.

'Out of 20 major medical infrastructures in Taiz governorate, 14 are closed and the remaining hospitals are overwhelmed. Out of eight urban women and children health centers, six are completely closed and only one is functional, but remains unable to run at full capacity due to the lack of fuel. MSF has started a new mother and child project in one of the hospitals, which now also contains an OPD/Emergency room, reproductive health and nutrition activities.'

'Large civilian populations also remain in towns in Saada and north Amran governorates, near the Saudi border. Many health facilities have been damaged or destroyed, medical staff have fled, and transport is extremely challenging due to high fuel prices and insecurity on the roads.'

'The MSF Emergency surgical hospital in Aden is still treating victims of violence, including war wounded referred from the frontline north of Aden, and patients wounded during clashes among armed groups or violent crimes.'

'MSF stated in December 2015 that 'It is extremely difficult for the general population to move anywhere, food and water costs continue to increase, and hospitals have inadequate provisions of diesel to keep generators running. Sana'a remains without city power, and populations not living in direct proximity to health structures do not have the means to access healthcare.'⁷⁴

7.5.9 On 16 February 2016, the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator told the UN Security Council that: 'Chronic drug shortages, unpaid salaries, and conflict related destruction means that around 14 million Yemenis do not have sufficient access to healthcare services. Since March last year, nearly 600 health facilities closed due to damage, shortages of critical supplies or lack of health workers. Nearly 220 of these facilities used to provide treatment for acute malnutrition. In January alone, at least three health facilities were damaged - one hospital

⁷³ Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Yemen: Health facilities under attack, MSF wants answers, 25 January 2016, <http://www.msf.org.uk/article/yemen-health-facilities-under-attack-msf-wants-answers> [date accessed 1 February 2016]

⁷⁴ Médecins Sans Frontières/Doctors Without Borders' (MSF), Crisis Update: Access to healthcare December 23, 2015, <http://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/country-region/yemen> [date accessed 23 February 2016]

in Sa'ada Governorate and two facilities in Nahim district of Sana'a Governorate.'⁷⁵

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7.6 Commercial and Humanitarian access

7.6.1 UNOCHA's 'Yemen: Snapshot on Shipping, Food and Fuel Imports for January 2016' issued on 13 February 2016 noted that:

'Yemen is 90-100% dependent on imports for essential food, fuel and medical supplies, which continue to be restricted due to the controlled maritime environment imposed by the Coalition and Government of Yemen, which is continuing to affect commercial confidence and cause delays; damage to port infrastructure; and a lack of foreign exchange to pay for imports. Although commercial and humanitarian food imports increased in January 2016, they still remain lower than pre-crisis monthly requirements.'⁷⁶

7.6.2 UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, dated 18 February 2016 noted that:

'Access constraints continue to pose a serious challenge to humanitarian operations in several locations, most notably Taiz City and areas bordering Saudi Arabia. However, partners are able to work in the vast majority of the country, and assistance is able to reach almost all communities – albeit with occasional delays due to insecurity or interference by parties to the conflict.'

'As part of the planning process, OCHA field staff estimated the relative severity of access constraints in all 333 districts using a five-point scale. This analysis was then revised by clusters to reflect their operational experience. The result shows that severe access constraints – while unacceptable under any circumstances – are highly localized and relatively rare. Partners estimate that 75 per cent of districts in the country face relatively low access constraints, and only 7 per cent were categorized as facing either of the two highest levels of constraint. The most serious constraints persist in front-line areas in Taizz, Marib and Al Bayda, as well as areas of Hajjah and Sa'ada bordering Saudi Arabia that regularly experience heavy air strikes and cross-border shelling. Although geographically limited, needs of affected people in these areas are among the most severe, and it is essential to overcome access obstacles as quickly as possible.'

'In 2016, partners will strengthen access monitoring and advocacy efforts, focusing on improving access and identifying the consequences on people in limited-access areas. An Access Monitoring and Reporting Framework was adopted in November, standardizing access constraint categories that will be tracked through a secure database that came online in December. These

⁷⁵ Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Statement to the UN Security Council on Yemen 16 February 2016 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-stephen-4> [date accessed 9 March 2016]

⁷⁶ UNOCHA, Yemen: Snapshot on Shipping, Food and Fuel Imports for January 2016 (issued on 13 February 2016) <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-snapshot-shipping-food-and-fuel-imports-january-2016-issued-13-february-2016-enar> [date accessed 9 March 2016]

efforts will improve the level of detail on the nature and location of constraints and inform advocacy.⁷⁷

7.6.3 The UN OCHA reported on 1 February 2016:

'Humanitarian agencies have reached at least 951,000 people in Taizz governorate and at least 532,000 in Ibb with assistance. Direct access into the enclave in Taizz City, however, remains restricted, although some limited quantities of food and medical supplies have reached the people living in the enclave. On 21 January, food assistance was handed over to implementing partners for 3,000 families after delivery trucks crossed into the enclave. On 19 January, 100 oxygen cylinders were delivered to hospitals in the enclave. Some commercial and humanitarian supplies have also been able to enter carried by donkeys and camels over the mountains south of the enclave. Some residents of the city are able to leave the enclave area by foot, and, with some difficulty, can return home with supplies that they can carry. However, the little assistance or supplies that have reached the enclave in Taizz are not sufficient to alleviate the suffering of the people living in the enclave.'

'Humanitarian access is not only problematic in Taizz, but in many other parts of the country. In the 21 conflict-affected governorates, continuing airstrikes and localised fighting continue to severely limit the movements of humanitarian workers as well as the delivery of supplies to people in need. In Aden, continuing violence has limited international humanitarian presence, while in Marib and Al Jawf, fighting between various parties has significantly deterred access to people who desperately need humanitarian assistance. In the northern areas of Sa'ada and Hajjah, air strikes and cross-border shelling is preventing access. In other areas, bridges and roads have been damaged in ongoing conflict such as bridges along the main route from Aden to Taizz, the Amran-Hajjah route, the Sana'a-Marib road, and the Hudaydah-Sana'a route. Alternative routes have been identified in some cases, but security concerns remain.'⁷⁸

7.6.4 The World Food Programme reported that: 'Since mid-April [2015], WFP has distributed almost 71,500 mt of food assistance or 6.3 million rations in 17 governorates in Yemen including Abyan, Aden, Ad-Dhalee, Al Mahwit, Amran, Dhamar, Hajjah, Hodeidah, Lahj, Sana'a, Sa'ada, Shawba, Taiz and Ibb.'

'In September [2015], WFP reached 2 million people received emergency food assistance. Of these, 987,500 were women and girls while 385,100 were children under the age of five. Nutrition food items were also provided

⁷⁷ UNOCHA, 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan, 18 February 2016, <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-2016-humanitarian-response-plan-january-december-2016>

⁷⁸ UNOCHA, Yemen Humanitarian Bulletin Issue 8, 1 February 2016 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/yemen-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-8-issued-1-february-2016> [date accessed 3 February 2016]

for almost 100,000 malnourished children and pregnant and nursing women.⁷⁹

- 7.6.5 UNHCR noted that: 'Despite severely restricted humanitarian access and security constraints, UNHCR reached over 280,000 internally displaced Yemenis with essential household items and shelter material in 2015.'⁸⁰
- 7.6.6 UN News Service noted in January 2016 that 'According to the agency, a 12-truck convoy entered the besieged areas of Al Qahira and Al Mudhafer districts on Thursday carrying 3,000 family food rations - each ration enough to feed a family of six for one month. The food includes vegetable oil, wheat, pulses and sugar.'⁸¹
- 7.6.7 On 15 February 2016, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) reported that it 'has successfully delivered food for 18,000 people to one of the 'enclaved' districts of Taiz. The convoy delivered 3,000 family rations including vegetable oil, wheat, pulses and sugar -- enough for a family of six for one month - to Al Qahira District. This followed an earlier delivery of food for 3,000 families to Al Qahira and Al Mudaffar Districts on 21 January.'⁸²
- 7.6.8 On 24 December 2015, the World Health Organisation (WHO) reported that 'it had delivered more than 100 tonnes of medicines and medical supplies for 1.2 million beneficiaries in 8 districts of Taiz governorate during the recent ceasefire but that the delivery of 22 tonnes of medical aid to five health facilities in Taiz city was "on hold due to access issues'⁸³
- 7.6.9 In his February 2016 statement the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator reported: 'UN agencies and their NGO partners are delivering assistance under extraordinarily difficult and dangerous circumstances across the country. For example, just this last Sunday [14 February 2016], a Saudi-led coalition airstrike hit a building 200 metres away from the Diplomatic Transit Facility, accommodating UN and diplomatic personnel...

'In addition to an already dangerous environment, parties to the conflict are contributing to the reduction of humanitarian access. The al-Houthis and allied groups remain inconsistent in allowing access and movement of humanitarian goods and personnel. Over the past week, while some UN agencies were given approvals, several others were denied for joint inter-

⁷⁹ World Food Programme, Yemen Emergency, undated <http://www.wfp.org/emergencies/yemen> [date accessed 25 January 2016]

⁸⁰ UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR warns against perilous Horn of Africa sea crossings as 92,000 reach Yemen in 2015, 36 already drowned this year, 19 January 2016, available at <http://www.refworld.org/docid/569e346b683b.html> [accessed 20 January 2016]

⁸¹ UN News Service, In breakthrough, UN agency delivers supplies to besieged districts inside Yemen's Taiz city, 25 January 2016, <http://www.refworld.org/docid/56a87e5c40d.html> [accessed 27 January 2016]

⁸² World Food Programme (WFP), WFP Food Convoy Enters Conflict Area Inside Yemeni City Of Taiz, 15 February 2016, <http://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-food-convoy-enters-conflict-area-inside-yemeni-city-taiz>

⁸³ The World Health Organisation (WHO), WHO delivers medical aid for 1.2 million people in Taiz, Yemen, during ceasefire, 24 December 2015, <http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-delivers-medical-aid-for-12-million-people-in-taiz-yemen-during-ceasefire.html>

agency missions to Ibb, Taizz and Sa'ada. While humanitarian deliveries are ongoing in areas where Al Qaida in the Arab Peninsula is present, international humanitarian movement to these areas is extremely challenging and dangerous. This includes locations in the Hadramaut governorate, but also in Aden where severe insecurity prevails.⁸⁴

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8. Freedom of movement

8.1.1 The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports that Internal displacement is growing across the country, and air-strikes and ground fighting have restricted freedom of movement for some populations who are cut off from basic supplies and services.⁸⁵

8.1.2 The US State Department Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Yemen – 2014, reported:

‘The law provides for freedom of internal movement, foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation, and the government generally respected these rights, with some restrictions. Prior to September the government cooperated with the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other humanitarian organizations in providing protection and assistance to IDPs, refugees, returning refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and other persons of concern. Houthi presence, however, made it difficult for UNHCR’s implementing partners to reach many areas of the country due to security concerns’.

‘According to the UNHCR, the country’s laws and policies were consistent with international standards, but the government’s capacity to protect and assist persons in need was limited. The government’s ability to provide services in some parts of the country was weak, since it focused limited resources on maintaining stability during the political transition’.

‘The government at times restricted domestic travel by refusing to issue travel permits to conflict areas, and the army, security forces, and tribesmen maintained checkpoints on major roads. In many regions, especially in areas outside effective central security control, armed tribesmen frequently restricted freedom of movement, operating their own checkpoints, sometimes with military or other security officials, and often subjecting travelers to physical harassment, extortion, theft, or short-term kidnappings for ransom. The number of nongovernment checkpoints increased in many governorates as central government control in those areas weakened’.

⁸⁴ Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Statement to the UN Security Council on Yemen 16 February 2016 <http://reliefweb.int/report/yemen/under-secretary-general-humanitarian-affairs-and-emergency-relief-coordinator-stephen-4> [date accessed 8 March 2016]

⁸⁵ UNHCR, Yemen Situation Supplementary Appeal 2016, p 8 <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/UNHCR%20Yemen%20Situation%202016%20Supplementary%20Appeal%20Feb%202016.pdf> [date accessed 8 March 2016]

‘Social discrimination severely restricted women’s freedom of movement. Women in general did not enjoy full freedom of movement, although restrictions varied by location. Some observers reported increased restrictions on women in conservative locations where government control was weaker or absent, such as Sa’ada. Security officials at government checkpoints often required immigrants and refugees traveling within the country to show they possessed resident status or refugee identification cards. At times local officials reportedly did not honor official documents’.

‘The law requires women to have the permission of a husband or male relative before applying for a passport or leaving the country. A husband or male relative may bar a woman from leaving the country by placing a woman’s name on a “no-fly list” maintained at airports, and authorities strictly enforced this requirement when women traveled with children. The NDC outcomes recommended lifting restrictions on women’s travel. The government limited the movement of foreigners, who were required to obtain exit visas before leaving the country.’⁸⁶

8.1.3 Freedom House reported that:

‘Freedom of movement, property rights, and business activity are impaired by insecurity and corruption. Many Yemenis rely on migrant work in Persian Gulf countries, where their rights are often precarious. Hundreds of thousands of Yemenis were abruptly deported from Saudi Arabia during a crackdown on foreign workers in 2013.

‘Women continue to face discrimination in several aspects of life. A woman must obtain permission from her husband or father to receive a passport and travel abroad, cannot confer citizenship on a foreign-born spouse, and can transfer Yemeni citizenship to their children only in special circumstances.’⁸⁷

8.1.4 Janes’s reported in January 2016 that:

‘Most territory is either under the de facto control of local tribes who traditionally used road blocks to negotiate with the government over security issues and economic benefits, or the Houthi movement, which unilaterally took over the Yemeni government on 6 February 2015. Growing economic pressure on the Houthi-controlled government alongside the ongoing intensification of sectarian conflict presents severe hijacking risks to cargo crossing de facto borders between Houthi and non-Houthi territory. Risks are highest between Sanaa and Ma’rib, and around Hodeidah and Aden, where food and other imports can be controlled.’⁸⁸

⁸⁶ United States State Department Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Yemen – 2014 published 25 June 2015, <http://www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/hrrpt/humanrightsreport/index.htm?year=2014&dliid=236630> [date accessed 27 January 2016]

⁸⁷ Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2015 – Yemen – section ‘Personal autonomy and individual rights’ published 27 February 2015 <https://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2015/yemen> [date accessed 27 January 2016]

⁸⁸ Janes, Sentinel Country Risk Assessments, Yemen, Security, 13 January 2016, available by subscription (date accessed 27 January 2016)

8.1.5 The Foreign & Commonwealth travel advice website (current on 9 March 2016) stated that:

‘Given the current political and security situation, there’s limited government control over parts of the country with Houthi or Al-Qaeda dominance in some areas... Access routes in and out of major cities may be closed or blocked...

‘Yemeni air space is currently controlled by Saudi-led coalition forces. Yemenia Airways is operating limited flights from Sana’a and Aden airports, however their schedule is subject to last minute alterations or cancellation.’

‘There are no direct cargo or passenger flights between Yemen and the EU. Previous aviation incidents have included a failed attempt to bomb an aircraft destined for the USA, and two explosive devices identified in air cargo originating from Yemen.

‘As part of the coalition response to the Houthi aggression, maritime restrictions are currently in place resulting in variable port and vessel accessibility. Attacks of piracy against vessels in and around the Gulf of Aden, Somali Basin and Indian Ocean are continuing. Sailing and other low-speed vessels are at particular risk, as are shipping vessels which have not adopted agreed industry best practice, including on routing. Maritime terrorism cannot be ruled out.’⁸⁹

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⁸⁹ Foreign & Commonwealth Office Travel Advice: Yemen – last updated 19 January 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/yemen> [date accessed 9 March 2016]

Annex A: Maps and current resources

Given the changeable situation, the following provides updated material against which an assessment of a person's claim can be made.

Security Situation

- AEI Critical Threats,
Yemen section: <http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen> and
- Yemen Crisis Situation Reports 2016:
<http://www.criticalthreats.org/yemen/yemen-crisis-situation-reports-2016>

For more information about groups active in Yemen, see

- IRIN News: <http://www.irinnews.org/country/ye/yemen>

For the latest news updates regarding Yemen see:

- <http://www.conflictmap.org/conflict/yemen>

Humanitarian Situation

- ICRC
<https://www.icrc.org/en/where-we-work/middle-east/yemen>
- MSF
<http://www.msf.org.uk/country-region/yeme>
- WHO
<http://www.who.int/hac/crises/yem/en>
- UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA):
http://reliefweb.int/updates?search=%28+primary_country%3A%22Yemen%22+%29+AND+%28+source%3A%22UN+Office+for+the+Coordination+of+Humanitarian+Affairs%22+%29+AND+%28+format%3A%22Situation+Report%22+OR+ocha_product%3A%22Humanitarian+Bulletin%22+%29

Maps

- Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Yemen: Travel & Briefing Notes:
https://assets.digital.cabinet-office.gov.uk/media/513b8a10e5274a4612000010/120607_Yemen_pdf.pdf

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Version Control and Contacts

Contacts

If you have any questions about the guidance and your line manager or senior caseworker cannot help you or you think that the guidance has factual errors then email [the Country Policy and Information Team](#).

If you notice any formatting errors in this guidance (broken links, spelling mistakes and so on) or have any comments about the layout or navigability of the guidance then you can email [the Guidance, Rules and Forms Team](#).

Clearance

Below is information on when this version of the guidance was cleared:

- version **2.0**
- valid from **12 April 2016**
- this version approved by **Sally Weston, Deputy Director, Legal Strategy Team**
- approved on: **26 March 2016**

Changes from last version of this guidance

Updated Country Information

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